



Week of Feb. 13 – Feb. 19, 2008

Professional Military Relationships

Just as we are expected to arrive at work on time and perform our work at a certain skill level, we are also expected to meet standards in our professional relationships. We have all seen or heard stories about favoritism; "teacher's pets," people who "take care of their friends," etc. You may have also seen or heard about people who abuse their positions and act in their own selfish interests. We tend to be suspicious of the decisions and motives of people who engage in favoritism or misuse their positions. When leaders are fair and make decisions for the right reasons, morale and willingness toward positive duty performance increases.

"Professional relationships" are described as personal interaction that adds to morale, discipline and respect for authority. Open communication about careers, duties, performance and the mission is always encouraged, as is participation in activities that contribute to esprit de corps and have positive effects on others. When relationships have the opposite effect and break down or destroy morale, discipline or respect for authority, they become a matter of official Air Force interest.

"Unprofessional relationships" are described as personal interaction that results in, or reasonably creates, the appearance of favoritism, misuse of position or authority, or the abandonment of organizational goals for personal interests. Depending on the circumstances, we all are susceptible to entering into relationships that will hurt morale or respect for authority.

Some general guidelines to keep in mind:

- Fraternization is a personal relationship between an officer and an enlisted member that violates the customary bounds of acceptable behavior. It's a violation of Article 134, UCMJ
- All military members share responsibility for maintaining professional relationships; senior member bears primary responsibility
- Gambling, partying with subordinates, soliciting or entering into business ventures with junior members may result in adverse impact on morale, discipline and respect for authority
- Dating and close friendships become matter of official concern when they adversely affect morale, discipline, unit cohesion, etc. This may apply even when members are not in the same unit or chain of command
- A wide spectrum of administrative actions can be taken by commanders in response to unprofessional relationships

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